

Working With Children with Anxiety

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excellence in child & adolescent behavioral health

What is Anxiety?

I am not anxious.
I am just extremely well
educated about all
the things that
can go
catastrophically
wrong.



somee cards
user card

What is Anxiety?

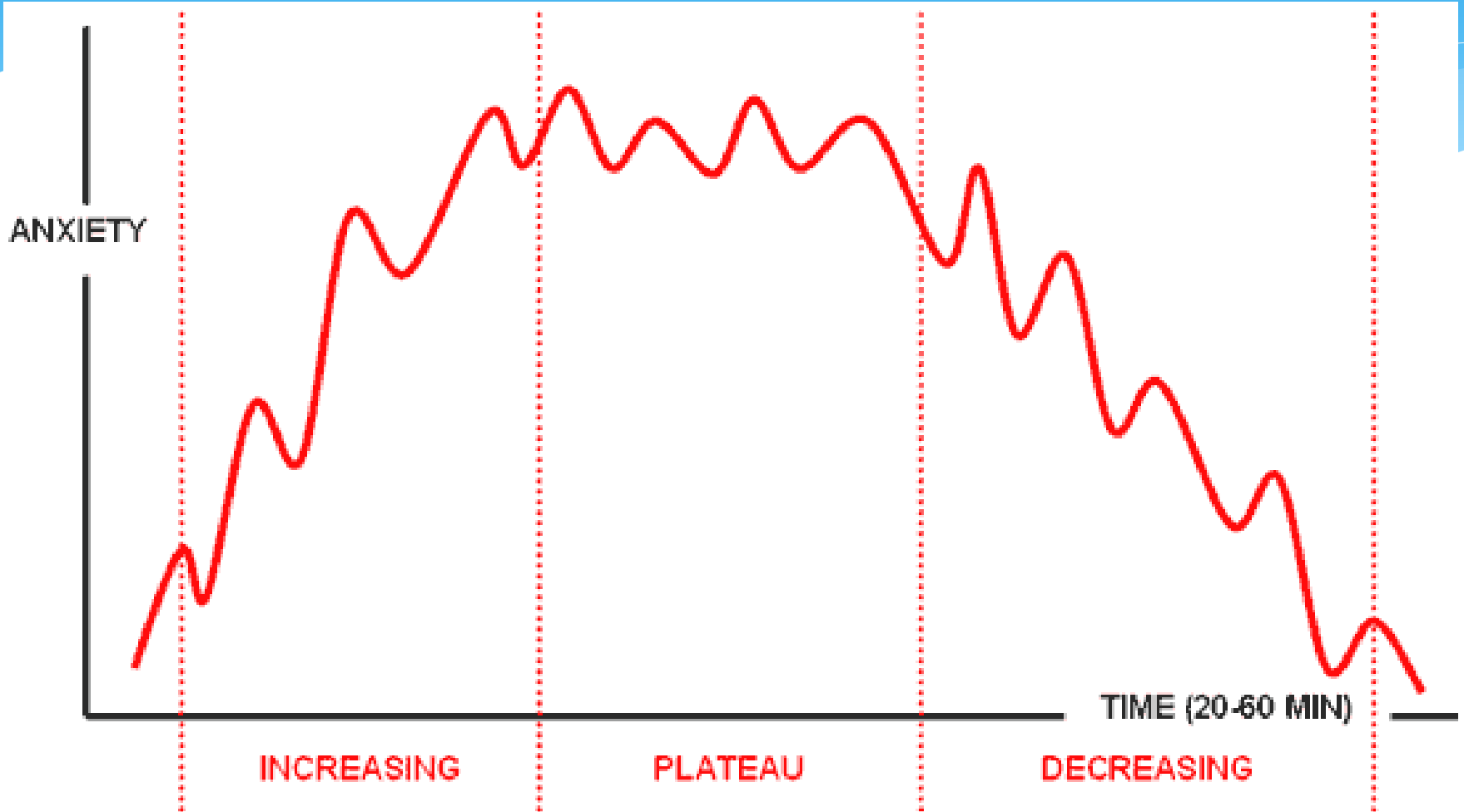
- * Feared stimulus of some type
- * Some behavior designed to mitigate and/or avoid the anxiety

I've got 99 problems and
86 of them are
completely made up
scenarios in my head
that I'm stressing about
for absolutely no
logical reason.



som**ee**cards
user card

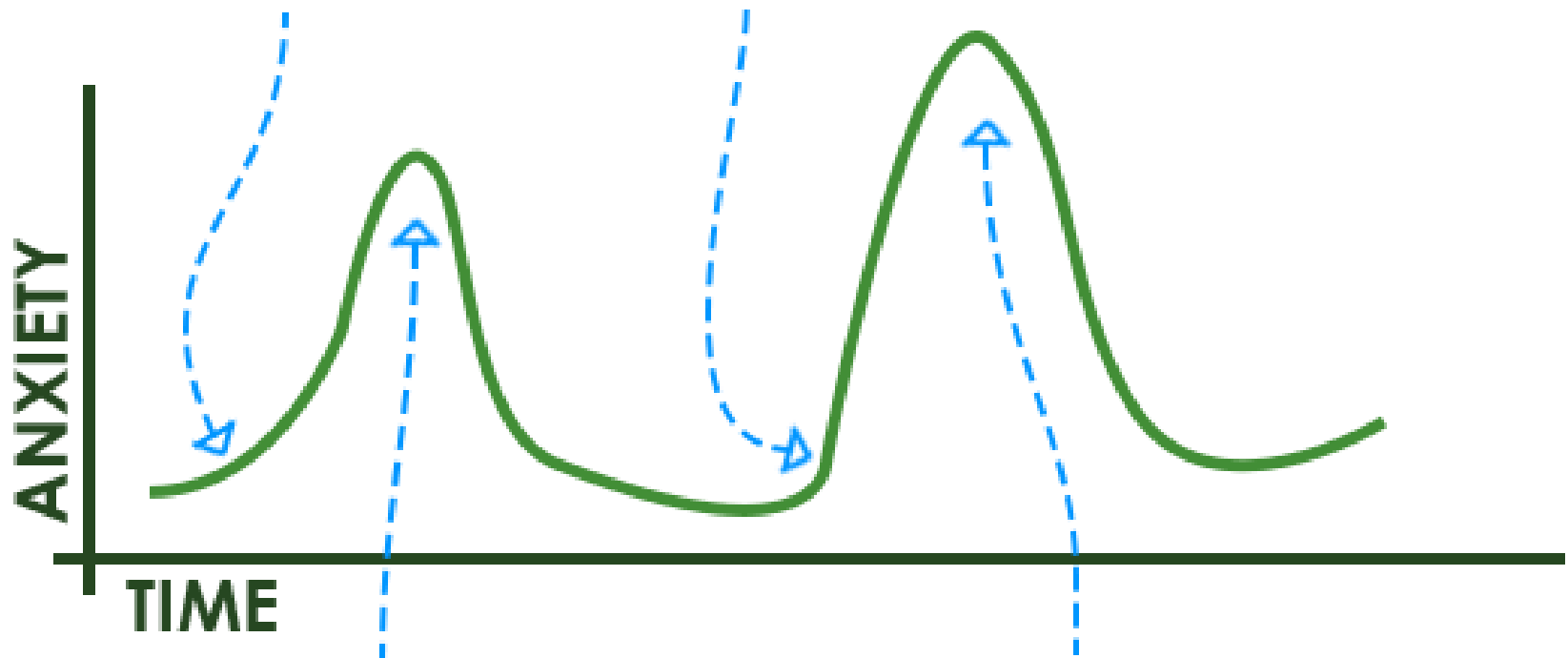
Cycle of Anxiety



How things go from bad to worse

- * Individual feels anxiety
- * Engages in behavior
- * Behavior coincidentally occurs at the point in the anxiety cycle where it would decrease and/or decreases anxiety by removing the individual from the anxiety provoking situation
- * Behavior is reinforced by the decrease in anxiety

(A person is confronted with an anxiety-producing situation which leads to an uncomfortable sense of worry and agitation.)



(The anxiety-producing situation is avoided, and the person receives a feeling of relief. However, next time the anxiety will be worse.)

**I STRESS ABOUT STRESS BEFORE
THERE'S EVEN STRESS TO
STRESS ABOUT. THEN I STRESS
ABOUT STRESSING OVER STRESS
THAT DOESN'T NEED TO BE
STRESSED ABOUT.
IT'S STRESSFUL.**

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What does it look like at home or school?

- Sometimes ... nothing
- Fight, flight or freeze
- Irritability
- Unpredictable reactions
- Attendance issues
- Smart, capable kids who can't finish work, turn it in, and/or don't do well on tests
- Inattention and restlessness
- Troubling answering questions when called on
- Frequent trips to the nurse

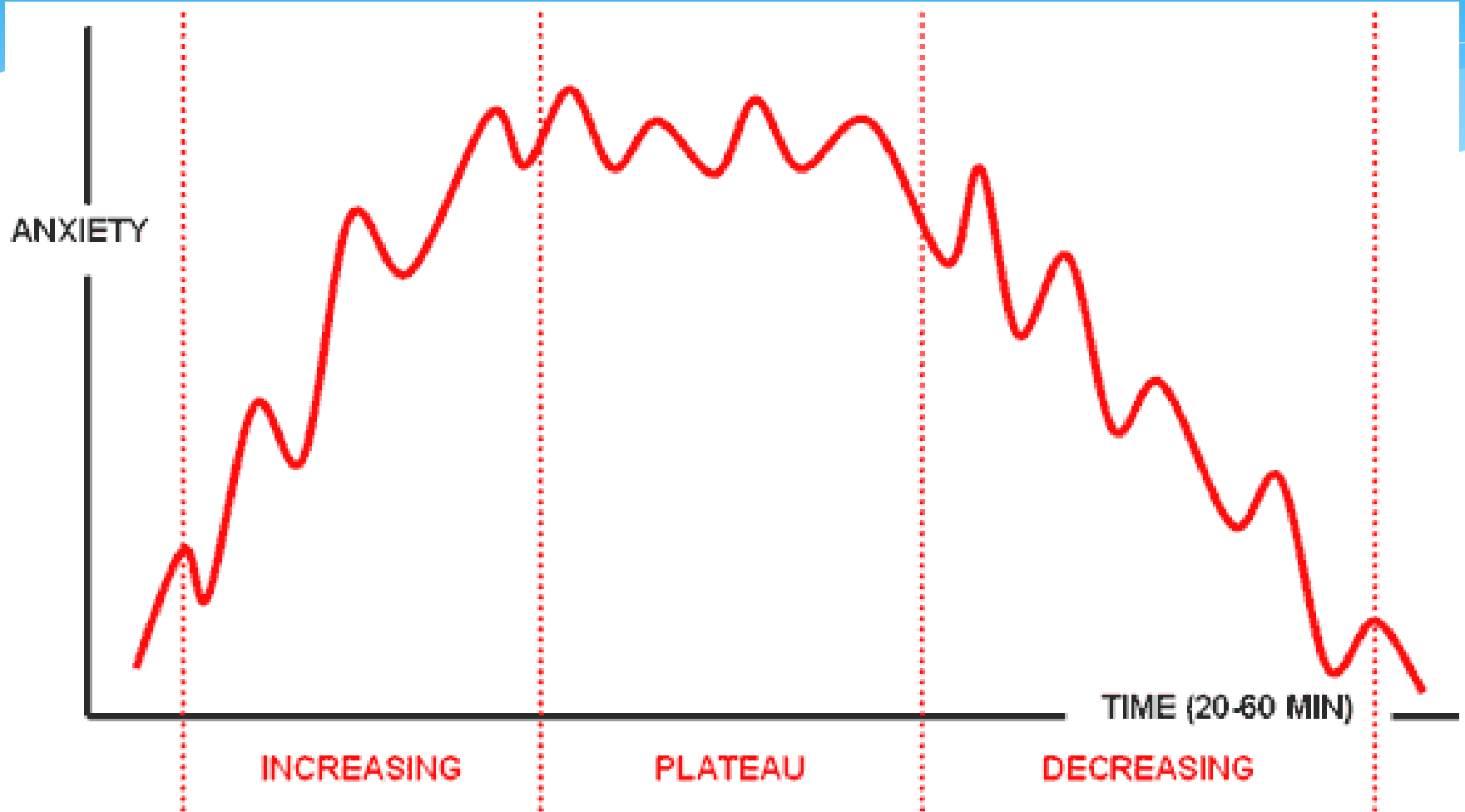
What does treatment look like?



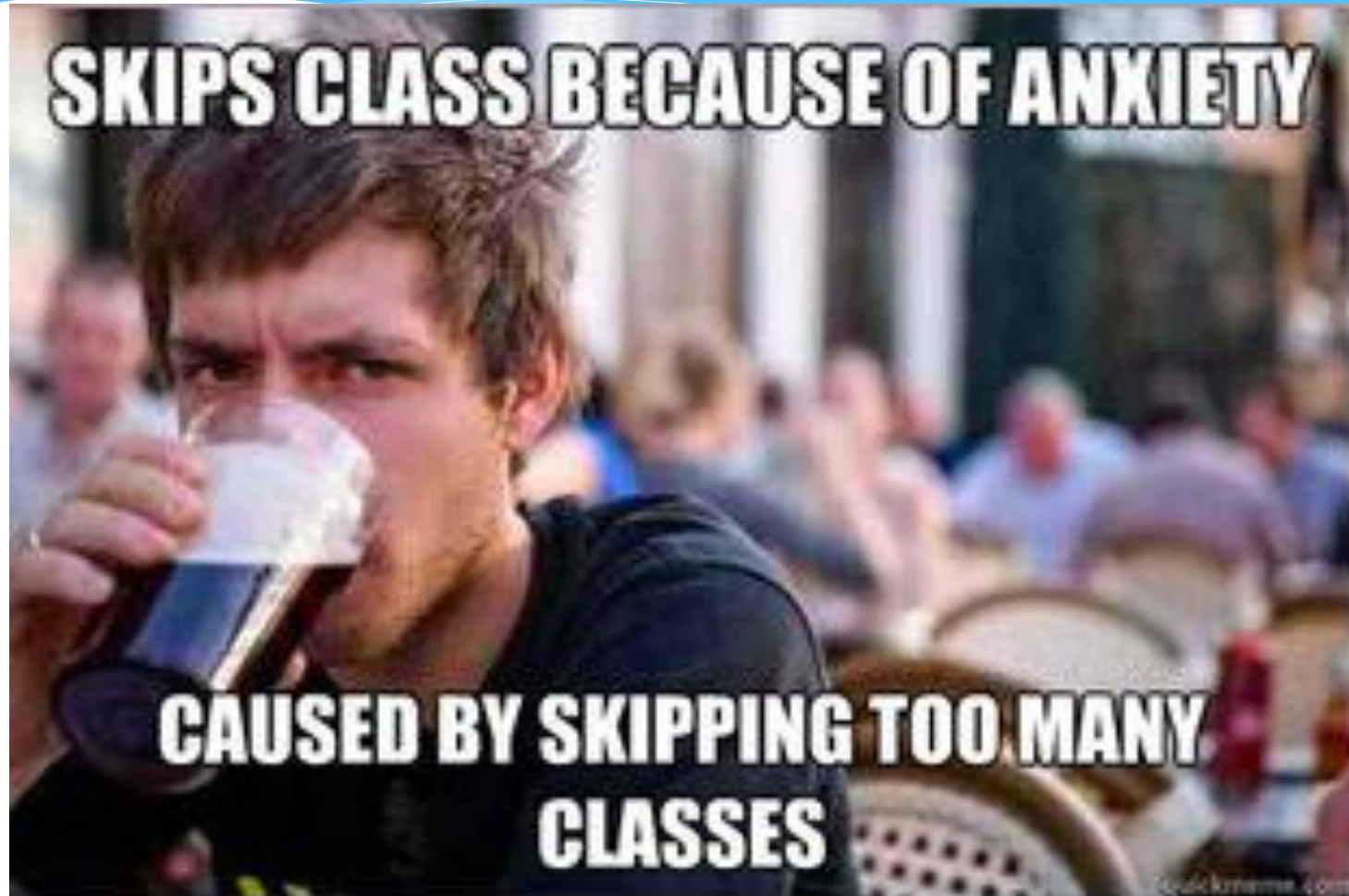
What does treatment look like?

- * Exposure to the thing that makes them anxious
WITHOUT the avoidant behavior

Cycle of Anxiety



What can schools can do to help



What can schools can do to help

- Help the family access resources
- Assist with developing and implementing exposure protocols
- Assist with appropriate adaptations or modifications to assignments or school days
 - <http://www.worrywisekids.org/node/40>
- Find places the student can go to calm down and/or people they can access as resources
 - Consider implementation of classroom or school-wide strategies
- Avoid reinforcing the student's fears

What parents can do to help

ANXIETY GIRL!

able to jump to the worst conclusion
in a single bound!



What can we do to help

- * Be brave
- * Help the child face their fears
- * Reassure them, but don't remove them
- * Teach them how to label and explain their emotions
- * Teach them ways to manage their anxiety
- * Make it clear that your goal is not to eliminate anxiety, but to not let it stop them from doing the things they want